

## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of Michigan

United States of America

v.

Ronnie Johnson JR.

Case: 2:22-mj-30218

Assigned To : Unassigned

Assign. Date : 5/9/2022

CMP: USA v JOHNSON (MAW)

## CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of May 9, 2022 in the county of Wayne in the  
Eastern District of Michigan, the defendant(s) violated:

*Code Section**Offense Description*

21 U.S.C. § 846

Conspiracy to distribute controlled substances


18 U.S.C § 922(g)

Possession of a firearm by a prohibited person

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See attached affidavit

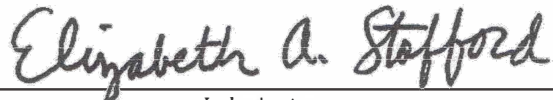
☐ Continued on the attached sheet.

*Complainant's signature*

Bradley Cioma, Special Agent, FBI

*Printed name and title*

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence  
and/or by reliable electronic means.

Date: May 9, 2022City and state: Detroit MI.*Judge's signature*

Hon. Elizabeth A. Stafford, US Magistrate Judge

*Printed name and title*

## **AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

I, Bradley Cioma, being first duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

### **Introduction and Agent Background**

1. I am a Special Agent with the FBI and have been since May of 2017. I am assigned currently to the FBI Detroit Division's Strike Force Group 1. Prior to working at the FBI, I was a police officer for six years in Plymouth Township, Michigan. I have participated in training related to and conducted dozens of investigations of federal and state violations, including crimes of violence, firearms, and drug trafficking.

2. The statements contained in this Affidavit are based on my experience as a special agent, information provided by police officers, other agents of the FBI, and other law enforcement personnel, communications with others who have personal knowledge of the events and circumstances described herein, and information gained through training and experience.

3. The information outlined below is provided for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause and does not contain all the information known to law enforcement related to this investigation.

There is probable cause to believe that Ronnie JOHNSON JR, date of birth XX/XX/1994, has committed the offenses of conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, 21 U.S.C. § 846, and possession of a firearm by a prohibited person, 18 U.S.C. § 922(g),

**Probable Cause**

4. On February 28, 2022, Detectives from the Michigan State Police (MSP) were observing the public areas of the Greyhound Bus Station in Detroit, Michigan. MSP Detectives frequently monitor the Greyhound Bus Station for drug trafficking based on historic patterns and their training and experience. They have learned to look for certain indicators or practices used by drug traffickers to minimize the amount of time spent in the Greyhound Bus Station, apparently believing that it will reduce their potential exposure to law enforcement. One such practice is having one person buy a ticket, and then have someone else return later with the ticket and the illegal narcotics to board the bus. Another practice is waiting in the vehicle in which they arrived and enter the lobby of the Greyhound Bus Station right before departure.

5. MSP Detectives observed these behaviors on February 28, 2022. At approximately 6:00pm, a dark blue Dodge Ram pulled up to the

Greyhound Bus Station and a male wearing a blue jacket, white t-shirt and red shoes exited the vehicle. The male walked into the station and purchased a ticket and then left the station, getting back into the Ram and driving away. The subject appeared to be the driver of the vehicle (this subject was later identified as JOHNSON JR).

6. GIBBS got in line for the 8:35pm bus and began staring directly at the MSP Detectives. The Detectives approached GIBBS and he agreed to talk with them. GIBBS showed them a bus ticket. GIBBS said he was going to Pittsburgh but didn't have any identification. GIBBS told the Detectives that his name was not on his ticket because someone else had bought it for him. GIBBS also falsely told them that his name was "Rodney Denzel Gibbs." It is a common tactic for narcotics traffickers to use a false name on their bus ticket and to also provide a verbal alias to hide their identity.

7. The Detectives told GIBBS why they were monitoring the bus station and told him that they could not verify his identity. GIBBS then gave them an address, which also could not be verified in LEIN. When asked, GIBBS said he was not carrying any weapons or drugs on him or in his bag and consented to a pat down. GIBBS then provided a Michigan

Identification Card, which showed his name as Denzel Anthony GIBBS. This was not the name on the bus ticket, either.

8. GIBBS consented to a search of his backpack and, while removing it, stated “I can’t lie to you anymore, I have drugs in my bag”. In the backpack, Detectives found plastic baggies containing approximately 1.5 kilograms of methamphetamine, 68.8 grams of crack or cocaine base, and 16.3 grams of cocaine, as determined by TruNarc scans on samples of each substance.

9. Detectives arrested GIBBS, which was later converted to a federal complaint alleging a violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1) (22-mj-30109). After his arrest, GIBBS gave a Mirandized statement to MSP Detectives at the Macomb County jail in which he claimed responsibility for everything found in his backpack at the Greyhound Bus Station, stating “it’s all me” and that no one else was involved.

10. When MSP Detectives arrested GIBBS at the bus station, GIBBS received a phone call that he answered through his Bluetooth headphones. The Detectives believed that GIBBS said “Chop I got hit” before the phone call ended. This appeared to be further evidence that GIBBS was acting as a “mule” or courier for someone. Due to my training

and experience, I know that narcotics traffickers will frequently check in on the individuals transporting their narcotics or “mules” to ensure that the “mule” has safely gotten on the bus to start their trip.

11. A search of GIBBS’s phone showed frequent contact on February 28, 2022, with phone number XXX-XXX-7389 saved under the name “Chop.” TLO, an open-source law enforcement database, showed that this phone number was associated with Ronnie JOHNSON JR and registered at XX457 Evergreen Rd, Detroit, Michigan.

12. GIBBS cell phone also showed a previous text conversation with “Chop” that took place on approximately December 31, 2021, and appeared to concern drug trafficking. In this conversation, “Chop” messaged GIBBS to ask if he wanted “a ball of soft right?”, to which GIBBS responded, “I said (emoji dog symbol).” Due to my training and experience I know that a “ball of soft” is a street term for an 8th of an ounce of powder cocaine. Additionally, dog or dogfood is a street term used for heroin or fentanyl.

13. GIBBS’s phone also contained a photograph sent by “Chop” on February 28, 2022, of a man holding a large sum of U.S. currency. The photographs were geolocated on the device as being near XX457

Evergreen Rd, Detroit, Michigan.



14. GIBBS's cell phone also had Instagram installed and showed the above picture in Instagram associated with the username of "Uncle\_\_chop".

15. MSP Detectives had noted that the man who got out of the Dodge Ram to purchase the bus ticket on February 28, 2022, was also wearing a blue jacket with a white shirt underneath. Detectives also reviewed JOHNSON JR's Michigan Secretary of State driver's license photo and confirmed that this was the same person who purchased the ticket. From these facts, I inferred that JOHNSON JR was "Chop" and "Uncle\_\_Chop."

16. Furthermore, location data obtained via warrant showed

“Chop’s” cellular device XXX-XXX-7389 hit off a tower near the Greyhound Bus Station in Detroit at approximately 6:00pm when JOHNSON JR. purchased GIBBS’s bus ticket. “Chop’s” phone hit off another tower near the Bus Station again at approximately 8:18pm when GIBBS was dropped off before his arrest, and then again at the Greyhound Bus Station in Detroit shortly before GIBBS’s arrest.

17. Investigators from the Drug Enforcement Administration in West Virginia had also observed JOHNSON JR meet with a suspected drug trafficker in Morgantown, West Virginia. The suspect had sold drugs to an undercover officer. Investigators observed this suspect travel to the area around Morgantown, West Virginia, several times in January 2022. Each time, the suspect picked up JOHNSON JR from a residence and they drove around the neighborhood for a short time before dropping JOHNSON JR back at the residence. I know from training and experience that this is consistent with drug traffickers receiving controlled substance from their source of supply.

18. West Virginia investigators executed a federal search warrant for a tracking device and placed it on a dark blue Dodge Ram 1500, MI dealer plate 029-D-615. This was the same vehicle that had transported



JOHNSON JR and GIBBS to the Greyhound Bus Station on February 28, 2022. On or about March 14, 2022, the tracking device placed the Dodge Ram 1500 at XX457 Evergreen Street in Detroit.

19. The Instagram account “Uncle\_\_Chop” contains several publicly-available posts and photographs, many of which depict JOHNSON JR, including the photo above where he is holding the stack of cash. One of the posts shows JOHNSON JR holding a rifle with the text, “Plug tryna tax but I can not let him work me. . . he said he got a set price an he ain’t budging” next to a photograph of JOHNSON JR. holding what appears to be a rifle. Based on my training and experience, I know that “plug” is a slang word for someone who supplies controlled substances.



20. “Uncle\_\_Chop” also made publicly-available posts on Instagram on April 22, 2022, which depicted JOHNSON JR. counting large stacks of cash. JOHNSON JR was using a money counter in the picture to count the money.



21. On May 9, 2022, agents executed a federal search warrant at XX457 Evergreen Street, Detroit, Michigan. JOHNSON JR was the sole occupant of the residence at the time of the search. Agents confirmed that the photo above was taken inside XX457 Evergreen Street, in part because of the unusual brick bar or divider with wood over the top and side. In a bedroom, agents found a Glock 43 9mm pistol in a bag. Agents also found a Springfield XD 9mm pistol under the couch of the living room. A necklace chain with a large gold medallion imprinted with the

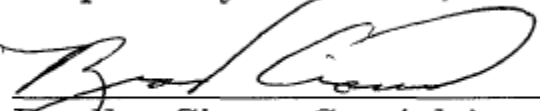
words “Big Chop” was on a coffee table in front of the couch. I have seen this same item on several Instagram photos by “Uncle\_\_Chop.” Agents also found approximately \$10,000 in cash.

22. JOHNSON JR was previously convicted of a felony on January 22, 2020, in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, for attempted drug trafficking, a violation of Ohio Code § 2925.03(A)(2).

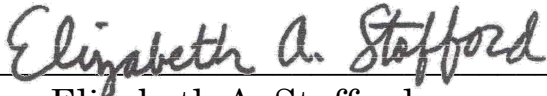
### **Conclusion**

23. Based on the above information, probable cause exists to believe that Ronnie JOHNSON JR. has violated 21 U.S.C. § 846, conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, and 18 U.S.C. § 922(g) possession of a firearm by a prohibited person.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bradley Cioma, Special Agent  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence  
And/or by reliable electronic means.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hon. Elizabeth A. Stafford  
United States Magistrate Judge

Dated: May 9, 2022